



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Fonfara, Representative Fontana, Members of the Energy and Technology Committee. For the Record, I am Representative Paul Davis (117th Assembly District serving Milford, Orange, and West Haven) and I come before you today to ask your support for HB 5814 "An Act Concerning Community Access Television".

This bill, if adopted, will offer municipalities' town specific government access television rather than a regional approach to government access television. Under current statutes the DPUC, an approved franchise holder, or third party provider may in fact determine the level and type of service provided in the service area. While this model seems to work well in most areas, it has not in some of the communities which I represent as well as other communities in Area 2 (which is composed of Woodbridge, Orange, Milford, Stratford, Bridgeport, and Fairfield).

In November 2006 the DPUC recertified Cablevision of Southern Connecticut as the franchised provider of cable television service in Area 2 and Sound View Community Media as a third party provider of PEG (Public, Educational, Government access) service. This in fact was in direct opposition to the desire of the community-at-large – which for well over a year previous had expressed to both the media providers and the DPUC their desires to have high quality town specific government access - all to no avail.

It is interesting to note that in its decision to extend the management approval to Sound View the DPUC indicated that Sound View would have to work on improving its relationship with the communities being served. It is also interesting that the DPUC denied a request by Sound View to be granted the third party provider request for Area 9 which covers lower Fairfield County principally because "the Department does not believe it is realistic to expect Sound View to be able to improve its strained relationships with the Cablevision of Southern Connecticut municipalities at the same time that it would be attempting to

establish positive relationships with the ten Cablevision of Connecticut municipalities and the Advisory Council.”

Currently the Towns of Orange and Woodbridge have been providing town specific programming for years without receiving the required support or funding from Sound View. In February 2006 when Milford started broadcasting town specific programming with the cooperation of Cablevision, Sound View ordered the broadcasting stopped because they did not approve. Subsequent to the DPUC franchise award, Sound View and Milford negotiated an agreement which allows limited town specific broadcasting. The philosophy of Sound View, the current third party PEG provider, is that the public is best served by exposure to local government proceedings broadcast regionally rather than town specific.

Passage of HB 5814 is imperative in making available to local residents, at a time when it is convenient for them that which they want most – the ability to keep apprised of “local government” activities and a means to keep up to date on the issues that impact their daily lives. Access to televised local meetings will provide this in a timely manner on a frequent and consistent basis. The proposed legislation will in fact give the people who are most directly affected the freedom to choose the type of programming that they feel will best meet their needs.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to address the committee and I ask that you act favorably on this matter.